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INDO-IRANIAN *RŮ-*, *LŮ-*, "TO PLUCK"¹

By BERNHARD GEIGER

It was Paul Horn who in his *Grundriss der Neupersischen Etymologie* (1893), "Nachträge", no. 628 bis, p. 258, sub *rūdan*, advanced two remarks which have contributed to a better understanding of the meanings and word formations of this verb. Of special importance was his reference to four words in passages of the Judaeo-Persian translation published in P. de Lagarde's *Persische Studien*.² These words are (1) Isaiah 15,2: *rēš rūdan* "tearing out (cutting off) beards" in connexion with making the heads bald; (2) Is. 18,2: *rūda*, part. pret. (whose hair was) "torn out"; (3) Is. 50,6: *rūnā-ān*, plur. of part. pres. "pulling out their hair" (from the faces: *MN rōy*); (4) Jerem. 16,6: *na rūd-āyad*³ "not (a beard) is pulled out", which is preceded by *na ĵarāḥat kard-āyad ba-ēšān*, "nor baldness is made because of them", i.e. as an expression of mourning.

In his second remark Horn pointed to Kurdish *we-rūtīn*, "to pluck, pull out, cut off", with the present *ez we-di-ruš-im*, but he was puzzled by the *š* of this form, the final explanation of which I shall propose in a later continuation of the present article.⁴ As to the word *rūt* Horn states (against Justi) that this is "probably" not a Mod.-Persian, but a dialectical form. But this is evident already from the final letter *t*.⁵ However, Horn overlooked the Balūči verb *runag*,

¹ The present article is only an excerpt from an hitherto unpublished extensive paper which I had prepared some time ago for a meeting of the American Oriental Society. Unfortunately lack of space prevented me from including more of the pertinent Iranian material and forced me to omit the equally important Indic material.

² *Abhandl.d.Ges.d.Wiss. Goettingen*, vol. 31, 1884.

³ Cp. *Grundr.d.Iran.Phil.*, vol. I, part 2, p. 412.

⁴ Justi's explanation in *Jaba-Justi's Dictionnaire Kurde-Français*, p. 299, is unsatisfactory.

⁵ In *Grundriss d.Ir.Phil.*I/2, pp. 8 and 80 he still says that *rut* is "perhaps" a Kurdish loanword in ModPersian. But this doubt is contradicted by the long list of passages in which the word occurs in dialects always in the form *rūt* (*rūt*)

runay, "to reap", aor. *runīt*, pp. *ruta*, *ruθa*, Skt. *lū*, *lunāti*, which had been listed already by W. Geiger in his "Etymologie des Balūči",¹ p. 39, Nr. 321.

As the Judaeo-Persian, Kurdish and Balūči words had escaped Bartholomae's notice, he read in his "Etymologie und Wortbildung der indogerm. Sprachen" (Heidelberg 1919), pp. 39 ff., the letters *low-*, which obviously represent *rūn-*, as *rōw-*, which he connected with the German "Raub, raufen", MidPers. *rōp*, "robbery" and *rubūdan*, "to rob". However, very soon he corrected this interpretation in a note to his treatise "Zur Kenntnis der mittelpersischen Mundarten III", (Heidelberg 1920), p. 8, where he conceded that *rūn-* is the right reading. But he added the reservation that "nevertheless", in view of the Sogdian *rōpam*, *rōpē* (1. und 2. sing. pres.) which are the translations of the Greek word meaning "to reap" in Luke 19, 21 f., the assumption might be justified that the root *ru-* goes back to an original verbal "raufen", consisting of *r* and *u* followed by a final labial. This reservation is for obvious reasons unacceptable, especially in view of the fact that the meaning "to reap" is assigned also to the unextended root *ru-*, in Balūči *runag*,² probably also in *Waχī ru-* "to cut off, to reap, to weed"³ and Pashtō *lau*, "reaping, crop, harvest".⁴

The original meaning of the verb *rū-*, *lū-* is very distinctly preserved in two passages of the MidPersian text of Xusrav ī kavātān.

and with the meaning "naked". In a similar way the closely related word which mostly appears in the form *lukht* (*lūht*, *lūt*), but also *luhd*, *lo^d*, with the meaning "naked", is not to be considered a genuine ModPersian word. Cp. the list in O. Mann-K. Hadank, *Kurd.-Pers. Forschungen*, Abt. III, Bd. 1, p. 153. This is, furthermore, confirmed by the remark in Andreas-Christensen, *Iran. Dialekt-aufzeichnungen*, Berlin, 1939, p. 474: "*luχt*, nackt, Umgangssprachlich (i.e. colloquially) Np. *luχt*". But it cannot be denied that *rut* as well as *luχt* have been attested by some Persian lexicographers as occurring in Persian verses, though this is by no means decisive.

¹ Abhandl. Bayr. Ak.d.Wiss., 1. Cl., Bd. XIX, Abth. 1, München 1890.

² e.g. M. L. Dames, *Popular poetry of the Baloches*, London 1907, vol. I, p. 91: *phauzhā ruθaye*, "did you reap a harvest?" (transl. vol. II, p. 91).

³ Pres. *wa-rīnam*, etc., p.p. *-rut* (*rūt*): Cp. Tomaschek, *Centralasiat. Studien*, Sitzungsber. Wiener Ak.d.W., Phil.-hist. Kl., Bd. XLVI, 1880, p. 867. Cp. now D. L. R. Lorimer, *The Wakhi Language*, 1958, vol. 2, p. 205, who attributes to this word the meanings "to pluck, esp. a fowl", and is of the opinion that the meaning "to weed" offered by R. B. Shaw is not justified.

⁴ Cp. e.g. Kalid-i Afghānī, p. 109, l. 2 from below: *lau ē pa kḥe vu-kar*, "reaping (harvest) by him was made".

H. W. Bailey has already proved¹ that in §26 of the text the word *rwot* (Ms. *rwtn*), which Unvala had wrongly interpreted as "trunk", is to be read *rūt*, "it was plucked". I found *rūt*, "it (sc. a kid) was plucked" also in §21 of the same text where Unvala offers the reading *rōt*, "the entrails". A few more radical corrections of wrong readings of the editor in this paragraph will be submitted on a later occasion. The same verb is used in a similar sense in the Iran. Bundahišn, p. 225, l. 5: *čēyōn mēš ka-š gurg pašm rūnēt* "like the ram when the wolf pulls out its wool". In the same text, p. 104, l. 11, we find the phrase *vars rūt*, "they pulled out (each other's) hair", said of the first pair of human beings who were beating each other very violently. The compound *vars-rūnišnīh*, "the pulling out of (somebody's) hair", appears in Māt.Hazār Dātistān II, p. 14, l. 16, in a list of physical injuries inflicted on persons in an assault. There is a similar long list of injuries (wounds) to be found in Dēnkart (Madan) II, p. 697, ll. 3 ff. (Sanjana, vol. XV, p. 42). However, here we find in the midst between abstract formations ending in *-išn* meaning "cutting, tearing, cleaving . . . piercing", etc., instead of *rūnišn*, the form *frāč-rūtak*, the participle of the preterite with the preposition *frāč*, which I would translate by "severely pulled (stripped) off". In a very similar context in Dēnk. Sanj., l.c., p. 44, where some of the verbs which in the passage mentioned just before, appear in the form of abstracts or of infinitives, the verbs are presented in the forms of the 3. sing. pret. pass., among them *rūt*, "he was stripped". In the edition of Madan, p. 698, l. 5, to letters of the word *rūt* the letters *mn* were added with the result that the correct word *rūt* became transformed into the Aramaic ideogram *LWTH*, Iranian *apāk*, "with", which is here out of place. Finally I wish to point to the passage in Dēnk. M., p. 728, l. 17 (=Sanj., vol. XVI, p. 6) which deals with the injuring of the bodies of birds and the pulling out of their feathers: *par(r)-rūnišnīh*.

From this survey of passages in which the original meaning of *rū-* has proved certain beyond any doubt, we have to conclude that in the legal case of Māt.Hazār Dāt. I., p. 73, l. 9 the word *rūnēt* cannot have a meaning as far remote from the original meaning as the interpretation "to abduct, steal, rob" given by Bartholomae in favor of his previous reading *rōwēt* (see above, p. 71). I think that *rūnēt* must

¹ *BSOS*, IX, p. 233. Unvala read the word in the Glossary, no. 419, as *rōt*, which means only "intestines", never "belly, trunk".

have here a meaning related to that of the above-mentioned *frāč-rūtak*, "severely plucked (split)"—which we have found among words designating heavy injuries—, "to pluck with violence", figuratively for "to deflower", i.e. to pluck (split) the sign of virginity of a woman under full age (*aṣurnāyīk*).¹

After we have paid special attention to some meanings of the word *rūtak* which are not easily understood, it is proper and necessary to discuss briefly a few peculiarities of the corresponding Arabic loanword *rauḍaq*. The dictionaries of Vullers and Steingass have thrown in *one* article all words which are written *rōd* or *rōda* into *one* pot. First of all the vocalization with the Majhūl vowel *ō* (therefore *rōda* and *rōd*), which Vullers and the Arabic and Persian lexicographers assigned to the ModP. word from which the Arabic loanword is derived, is wrong. The result of it was that this *ō* was rendered in the Arabic form by *au*, as usual, cp. *mauzaʿ*, "the boot", MidP. *mōčak*, ModP. *mōza*, or *ʃauhar*, "jewel", MidP. and ModP. *gōhar*, etc. As the MidP. form of the word under discussion is undoubtedly *rūtak*—a form *rōtak* cannot be taken into consideration at all—, the correct vocalization of the Arabic loanword can only be *rūḍaq*. Therefore A. A. Bevan was perfectly right when he chose, against the authority of the lexicographers and commentators, the vocalization with *ū* in the verse of the Arabic poet Al-Jarīr against the poet al-Farazdaq, whose enemy he was. I am giving only my translation of the verse: "There is nothing good in the wrath of Al-Farazdaq, after they have flayed your neck in the way in which one flays the skin of the plucked (lamb or kid or bird)" (*salḫa ʃildi ar-rūḍaqi*).²

Here we have to quote one more passage in which *rū-* is used in its original meaning. It is Šāyast-nē-šāyast (ed. J. C. Tavadia, Hamburg 1930), 4, 4, in which it is decided that a girdle made of

¹ Cp. e.g. Marathi *phoḍṇem* and Gujarati *phoḍvum*, "to break open, to burst by violence, to pluck (birds), to deflower".

² Dīwān of Al-Jarīr, ed. Cairo, 1313, part 2, p. 25, and The Naqā'id, ed. A. A. Bevan, vol. 2, p. 845, 10. My translation provides the real meaning of the word which is in contrast with the dictionaries and commentaries, but in perfect accordance with the MidP. *rūtak* from which it is derived. There does not exist any relationship whatsoever with the word *rōda*, MidP. *rōtik*, "intestines". G. S. Morgenstierne called in his article "Neupersisch *rūda* und Verwandtes" (Kuhn's Zeitschr., vol. 61, 1934, pp. 29ff.) the connection with the meaning "intestines" "hardly pleasing", but he did not get to a definite decision, because the MidP. *rūtak* was not yet known to him. The verse of Al-Jarīr is quoted in the Arabic dictionary Tāʾ al-ʿArūs under *rōq*!

leather is not good (from the point of religion), when the hair has been pulled (stripped) off from it (*mōd hač-aš rūt ēstēt*).

In the Artāk Virāz Nāmak, 23, 12, we encounter instead of *rūt* the stronger word *XPRUNt*=Iranian *kand* in the sentence *u-š hān ī χvēš mōd ut rēš hamē kand*, "and by him (the former sinner who is now tortured in hell with hunger and thirst) his own hair and beard was torn out all the time". The Kurdish verb *kandin*, which is identical with MidP. *kandan*, appears in the phrase *pūr kandin* for "to pluck fowl" (literally "the hair"),¹ in contrast to *par(r)-rūnišnīh*, "the plucking out of the feathers" (see above, p. 72).

In other derivatives from *rū-* the basic notion of the root is used in a wider sense in such a way that "the plucked one" is understood to mean "the naked". This is especially the case with the word *rūtak* in Artāk Virāz Nāmak, 17, 12, where the ugly incorporation of the evil *dēn* of the dead sinner is described as an ugly woman who is *rūtak* and *pūtak* ("rotten, i.e. stinking")—the other epithets which she receives are of no interest here. Haug and West have transcribed the first of the two words by *lūtak* and connected it with ModP. *lūt*, "naked, bare", which is however a dialectical (Kurdish) word (cp. above, p. 70, n. 5). It has now become evident that the correct reading of the word is *rūtak* and that its meaning "(stripped) naked" is firmly established. The Persian lexicographer Asadī explains in his *Luyat-i Furs* (ed. P. Horn, Berlin, 1894), fol. 10, the above (p. 70) mentioned word *rūt* correctly by *barahna va-tuhī*, "naked and empty". Salemann (Grundr. d. Iran. Phil., I/1, pp. 268 and 304) and Horn (*ibid.*, p. 28) have wrongly read *lūtak* (*lūdak*), which they connected incorrectly with *ālūdān*, "to pollute", and accordingly translated it by "dirty" ("schmutzig").

I am presenting here only one example of the meaning "bare" (*tuhī*) of the word *rut* (or *rūt*) by pointing to the compounds *ser-rūt* and *pai-rūt*, "bare-headed" and "bare-footed", respectively (Soane, l.c., p. 177). There are, besides that, words to be found which are related to *rut* and mean "barren", in the sense of "bald" or "beardless face", or "leafless branch", or "a plain without any vegetation". However, these and other characteristics of *rū-* and *lū-* and of related words in Iran and in India will be discussed on a later occasion. In

¹ Soane, Kurd. Grammar, p. 245. About *pūr*, "hair", *ibid.*, p. 214, and Jaba-Justi, l.c., p. 83.

conclusion I wish to add only a few remarks concerning the three words, (1) MidP. and ModP. *rēš*,¹ "beard" (BSogd.: Vess. J. 914 *ryš'k*), from *raēs*, "to spin" (i.e. to pull threads), (2) Skt. *pakṣman*-,² "eyelashes" (Avesta *pašna*- "eyelid", MidP. and ModP. *pašm*, "wool"); (3) *rōman*-,³ *loman*-, "hair". It is evident that the essential notion of these words is that they designate primarily threads or feathers which are the objects of plucking. From that we have to conclude that *rōman*- too is the expression for an object of plucking and that its hitherto unknown etymology is now definitely clear; that means that the word is a derivative of the verb *rŭ*- "to pluck".

¹ It means also the feather of a bird as well as the wool of a lamb and other animals, or threads of cotton or silk.

² Other meanings are the hair of a deer, the fiber of a flower, the feather of a bird.

³ It means also wool, feathers of a bird, fibers of cotton.